

# MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF  
CITY OF ALAMEDA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2010  
7:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Bonta called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

Present: Chair Bonta. Commission Members: Breuer, Dahlberg, Harrison, McKean, Reeves, and Ryan (arrived at 7:10 p.m.)

Absent: Commission Members: None

Vacancies: (2)

Staff: Leslie Little, Eric Fonstein, and Rosemary Valeska

2. MINUTES

2.a. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 19, 2010

Motion (Dahlberg), seconded, and unanimous to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 19, 2010 as submitted.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

(None)

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – PUBLIC

(None)

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(None)

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.a. Election of Officers for 2010-11

- i The vote for Chair was Bonta-4 and Breuer-3. The vote was inconclusive, as neither candidate received a minimum of five votes. Motion (Reeves), seconded, and unanimous to continue the vote for Chair to the next Regular Meeting.
- i The vote for Vice Chair was Harrison-3 and Reeves-4. The vote was inconclusive, as neither candidate received a minimum of five votes. Motion (Reeves), seconded, and unanimous to continue the vote for Vice Chair to the next Regular Meeting.

6.b. Presentation of the Façade Assistance Program for FY09-10

The PowerPoint presentation was given by Sue G. Russell of Economic Development. The link to this presentation can be accessed from the City of Alameda website on the following page:

[http://www.ci.alameda.ca.us/archive/agenda.html?agenda=cc\\_assoc\\_100907\\_1628](http://www.ci.alameda.ca.us/archive/agenda.html?agenda=cc_assoc_100907_1628)

Ms. Russell stated that \$250,000 was budgeted for the program in FY09-10, and the same amount was budgeted for FY10-11. This program generates almost \$3.00 in private spending for every public dollar spent. The program results in increased employment throughout the building trades: general contractors, painting and awning contractors, sign makers, window and door manufacturers, roofers, iron workers, painters, architects, and designers.

On July 13, Economic Development facilitated an FY10-11 program orientation meeting attended by approximately 25 potential applicants. Five projects are already approved and underway this fiscal year.

The Chair asked about the source of program funds. Ms. Little responded that the funds come from lease revenues and proceeds from asset sales. The funds do not come from Redevelopment or CDBG and therefore come with fewer restrictions for the applicants. Ms. Russell noted that the City also provides free design assistance for applicants. \$250,000 can fund 15-20 projects. Commission Member McKean asked how much of the program funds came from rent and how much from asset sales. Ms. Little responded that most of the funds come from returns on leases.

Commission Member Harrison asked about limitations on the removal of City property such as trees. He added that the new restaurant Fiddle & Frog, which is moving into the former Acquacotta space on Webster Street, was having signage problems due to trees. Ms. Russell responded that the removal of City trees was controlled by the Public Works Department and that under City law, healthy City trees cannot be moved unless it is for a streetscape project.

The Chair thanked Ms. Russell for the presentation. This item was provided for information, only; no EDC action was requested.

6.c. Off-Street Parking Ordinance Amendments

Planning Services Manager Andrew Thomas stated that these proposed amendments had been presented to the Planning Board on September 13. The Planning Board voted to recommend that the City Council adopt the amended ordinance. The proposed amended ordinance has been brought to the EDC for review and recommendation to the City Council.

Mr. Thomas stated that the proposed amended ordinance was trying to do two things: 1) improve regulations to better reflect Alameda; and 2) improve the process.

Regarding item no. 1, the old code was written with “enough parking” as the goal. The proposed amendments take into consideration impacts upon urban design, mass transit options, historic preservation policies, and global warming/sustainability.

Regarding item no. 2, the process has been difficult for a small business on a small parcel. Alameda’s parcels are small and often have historic structures on them. Internal reviews and a Planning Board review would be required to waive parking requirements. Parking in-lieu fees would be determined. This process was hard on small business owners, who did not know for months if they could open or not.

Under the proposed new regulations, no discussion of parking would be required for a permitted use in an existing building. Parking would be discussed for a conditional use, a new building, or a major expansion.

The current parking ratio for a retail use is five spaces per 1,000 s.f. The proposed new ratio is three spaces per 1,000 s.f. Ratios have also been reduced for offices and hotels. The proposed new regulations include a maximum parking number. This was done in anticipation of future development along Park Street north of Lincoln to discourage large parking areas between the sidewalk and buildings. The preference is for parking in back of buildings. For residential above retail, the new ratios would be a minimum of one space and a maximum of two spaces per unit. These ratios are in line with what has been approved using the current process.

The City wants to encourage shared parking. A business can opt to install parking meters in their lot. In order to reduce in-lieu fees, the City would be open to ideas other than dollars, e.g., instituting a Transportation Demand Management program and running a van or shuttle to BART. A business could also purchase off-site parking permits for employees.

Commission Member McKean asked about parking requirements for the former Video Maniacs space on Park Street. Mr. Thomas responded that it would depend if the proposed use was permitted or conditional.

Commission Member Breuer cited a problem with a home-based business on Harbor Bay having lots of work trucks parked in a residential area. Mr. Thomas stated that even if this business had a home occupation permit, having those trucks parked there would not be allowed. It would be a code enforcement issue.

Commission Member Breuer cited the ongoing problem of high school teachers and students parking in front of homes. Mr. Thomas responded that the City is actively working on this problem. The City has little

regulatory control over the school district. The most effective tool is neighborhood political pressure on the school principals. Commission Member Breuer asked if the City has talked with AUD about the parking garage option. Ms. Little stated that the more you accommodate the cars, the more people will drive to school in cars and we should not be accommodating students to drive.

Commission Member Harrison asked about neighborhood parking permits. Mr. Thomas responded that at the same time Planning presents the proposed amended ordinance to City Council, Public Works will also be presenting a plan for residential permit parking. Several years ago, Economic Development conducted a survey of residents regarding permit parking and some neighborhoods were very supportive, e.g., the 600 block of Pacific Avenue and the area around Encinal and Park Avenues. There needs to be enough people paying for permits; otherwise, the program becomes a constant drain on a city every year. Neighbors can set up their own district with a minimum size if they are willing to pay for it – it is a good way of stopping all-day parking. There have also been problems with commuters using residential areas as park-and-rides. The City is looking for a location for a park-and-ride lot near the Tubes on City-owned land.

The Chair asked how old were the items being amended. Mr. Thomas responded that they were pretty old and he could look it up. The Chair asked how does the City know that people will still shop if parking is not required. Mr. Thomas responded that there is plenty of parking even today but it is not well used. There are suggestions for managing parking demand. The projects approved over the last ten years are typical of what is getting built with these new parking numbers.

Commission Member Reeves stated that the merchants he speaks with do not think there is enough parking. He has been hearing this from Park and Webster merchants for over 20 years. The statement that there is enough parking is not true. Mr. Thomas responded that PSBA and WABA are in support of these changes. Ms. Little stated that the City has to look at restricted parking lots, e.g., move permit parking on private lots to the parking structure. Parking requirements have been an economic development disincentive in developing historic buildings.

Commission Member Harrison stated that both the Economic Development Commission's subcommittees for business retention and business attraction conducted surveys. There was no mention in either survey regarding lack of parking; however, there were lots of comments regarding red tape.

Mr. Fonstein stated that there are business owners who park in front of their retail buildings all day long. Pricing mechanisms can move longer term parking to outer areas.

Commission Member Reeves stated that we still have a parking problem in the business districts and objected to the comment that there is enough parking. He added that a parking structure is needed on Park Street north of Lincoln and on Webster if there is more development. The parking study was done in 2006-07, before the 2008 growth in development in the Park Street district. Ms. Little stated that they were invited to park in the parking structure.

The Chair stated that the EDC was being requested to provide formal comment to the City Council. Commission Member Harrison stated that there should be a comment regarding cutting through barriers. Commission Member Breuer stated that he agreed with Council Member Reeves and the EDC needs to send a clear message that we need more parking. Commission Member Reeves stated that we need a parking structure on Park Street north of Lincoln.

Mr. Thomas stated that the City was working on codes for Park Street north of Lincoln and Webster Street Visioning and parking is being explored.

The Chair asked how many spaces could be collected from private spaces. Mr. Thomas responded that he did not have that number available at this time.

Commission Member McKean asked what the City could do to offset liability for owners of private lots. Mr. Thomas agreed that this is a big issue for the property owners.

Motion (Reeves), seconded, and unanimous to recommend approval of the plan with the EDC's comments.

7. REPORTS

(None)

8. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

8.a. Upcoming EDC Agenda Items

- i Mr. Fonstein stated that based upon Council Member Harrison's earlier mention of the reports of the EDC's Business Retention and Attraction Subcommittees, an update on the Subcommittees' recommendations could be scheduled for a future meeting. Regarding the recommendation for an improved City website, the new website will be launched in 30-45 days.
- i Commission Member Reeves requested status updates regarding the Phua Project at Park and Buena Vista, the former Good

Chevrolet site, and 1400 Park Street, and would like to know what the EDC can do to remove roadblocks.

9. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF

- i Commission Member Reeves asked about the possibility of Central Avenue being closed off during December. He added that there are merchants who do not know about it if it is still going to happen. Ms. Little responded that the City does talk to the business associations. The plans for Webster Street will proceed. The Webster event will be used as a test for what might work on Park next year.
- i Commission Member McKean asked if locations have been set up for the Wine Walks. Ms. Little responded that there will be 11 locations on Webster. The Wine Walks will bring people to businesses that are traditionally retail and will also showcase our streets. Several businesses from outside Alameda and retail brokers have been invited as the City's guests to look at available spaces for possible expansion locations. We want to communicate how wonderful Alameda is. We will also have information about Alameda's other retail areas.
- i Commission Member McKean asked about the potential impact on retail sales now that Alameda Towne Centre is for sale. Ms. Little stated that it shouldn't be an issue, as the major tenants have long term leases. She added that Economic Development staff would be meeting with representatives from Harsch to discuss this.
- i The Chair asked about the possibility of a continuous shuttle running from Webster to Park to Alameda Towne Centre during the Holidays. Ms. Little stated that this had not been explored yet but she would take a look at it. She added that we need to be sure that it will result in getting people into businesses.
- i Mr. Fonstein distributed promotional postcards for the upcoming Wine Walks, which are scheduled for September 29 for Webster Street and October 14 for Park Street. Further information can be found on the official Wine Walk website, [www.alamedawinewalk.com](http://www.alamedawinewalk.com).
- i Mr. Fonstein stated that Jon Haveman of Beacon Economics will be presenting the East Bay Economic Forecast at the Elks Lodge on September 30.
- i Mr. Fonstein stated that Economic Development is partnering with Argosy University to provide a workshop for small businesses on October 27 regarding the effective use of social networking.

- i Mr. Fonstein stated that Economic Development is partnering with Alameda County SBDC to provide a workshop for local artists on November 3 regarding business development.
- i Mr. Fonstein stated that Saul Griffith, founder and CEO of Makani Power, appeared on a recent episode of *The Colbert Report*.
- i Ms. Little stated that 1553 Webster Street, currently being used by Frank Bette Center as a temporary gallery, will be used as the event check-in center for the Webster Wine Walk. A new tenant will be taking over the space effective October 1.
- i Ms. Little stated that Economic Development is assisting the Women's Initiative for Self Employment (WISE) locate into 1532 Webster Street. This will be a retail incubator and cooperative for up to eight retail businesses with the goal of getting these businesses into other spaces on the street. The CIC will assist with the lease for the first year with WISE paying other overhead costs. Any income above a threshold will be used to help with the rent.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Valeska  
EDC Recording Secretary

RV